



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MICHIGAN PUBLIC POOL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOLS 2007

This document is intended to clarify pool safety requirements for school personnel such as physical education educators, coaches, swim instructors, and school administrators. School swimming facilities provide excellent opportunities for students, however, the district must be responsible for the maintenance of a safe pool environment. Common inquiries about lifeguard requirements, safety equipment, and poolside safety are addressed in this document. The complete Public Act and Rules Governing Public Swimming Pools (Act 368 of 1978 Public Health Code) and other resources can be found at the State of Michigan, Department of Environmental Quality web site. Go to www.michigan.gov/deqwb and scroll down to Public Swimming Pools.

Public Act 368, R 325.2198, clearly specifies when a lifeguard must be on duty and the qualifications of that lifeguard.

A lifeguard **must** be on duty:

1. At swimming pools other than spas or wading pools.
2. At pools owned and operated by governments, public corporations, or a school.
3. If a pool has a water surface greater than 2,400 square feet.
4. If a pool has a diving board(s).
5. Whenever the pool is open for use.

There must be at least 1 lifeguard for every 75 swimmers.

The lifeguard on duty **must** meet *all* the following requirements:

1. Be a capable swimmer.
2. Be competent in life-guarding techniques.
3. Hold current certifications in adult, child, *and* infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation and training in 2-person and resuscitation barriers.
4. These current certifications *must* be posted in the pool area while the pool is open for use.
5. At a minimum, has satisfactorily completed a nationally-recognized course of instruction in life guarding.
6. Be dressed in suitable swimming attire and prepared to enter the water at any time.

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7. Readily identified as the lifeguard on duty.
8. Provide proper supervision of *all* students in the pool area.
9. Enforce rules pertaining to safety and sanitation.

If a supervising instructor, teacher, or coach does not meet the requirements of Rule R 325.2198, listed above, then a separate lifeguard who meets the requirements must be present.

Questions often arise about the requirements of schools to provide lifeguards. Frequently there is only one staff person on duty during class/practice. This may lead some to think that lifeguards need not be present, but usually the coach or physical education teacher is not only a qualified instructor, but also a certified lifeguard.

There *must* be a lifeguard on duty whenever the pool is open for use, which includes physical education class, practice, and when the pool is being used by staff or by any group, regardless of the level of swimming competency.

Can the swim instructor or coach also act as the lifeguard *if* he/she meets the qualifications listed above?

The answer is **yes** *but*....it is important to reiterate that if a swim instructor or coach is acting as *both* the instructor and lifeguard, he/she must always keep in mind that he/she is a lifeguard first and foremost.

- He/she *must* be dressed in suitable swim attire at all times.
- He/she should be familiar with and maintain the required safety equipment.
- He/she must be watching *all* the students at the *same* time, which translates to having the students do the same activities throughout class or practice.
- Diligence must be heightened if there are students with special needs under the instructor's supervision.
- There should be an emergency plan in place, of which students/participants should be aware and know what to do and where to go if the supervising teacher/lifeguard must respond to a pool emergency.

**Excerpts from the Public Health Code, Public Act and Rules Governing Public
Swimming Pools, Act 368 of 1978**

Note: The word department in this excerpt refers to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Drinking Water and Radiological Protection Division.

Safety Equipment Required R 325.2165

- (1) A swimming pool owner shall equip a swimming pool with an acceptable long spine-board that has a minimum of 3 ties, runners, and a head immobilizer.
- (2) A swimming pool owner shall equip a swimming pool with a first aid kit which is used primarily to treat small cuts, bruises, and burns and which contains all of the following first aid materials or their equivalent:
 - a) Four units of adhesive bandages, 1 inch by 3 inches.
 - b) Two units of 2-inch bandage compress.
 - c) One unit of 3-inch bandage compress.
 - d) One unit of 4-inch bandage compress.
 - e) Two units of absorbed gauze pad, 3 inches by 3 inches.
 - f) One unit of gauze compress, 18 inches by 36 inches.
 - g) Two units of large gauze compress, 24 inches by 72 inches.
 - h) Two units of 4-inch gauze roller bandages.
 - i) Two units of triangular bandages.
 - j) One unit of scissors.
 - k) One unit of tweezers.
 - l) Two units of instant ice packs.
 - m) Two units of latex disposable gloves.
 - n) One unit of adhesive plaster tape.
- (3) A swimming pool owner shall equip a swimming pool with a kit to clean up blood spills which consist of as a minimum, a pair of medical-grade latex gloves and an antimicrobial hand wipe.
- (4) A swimming pool owner shall equip a swimming pool, other than a wading pool or a spa pool, with both of the following:
 - a) A 1-piece, 12-foot long rescue pole which has blunt ends and which may have a shepherd's crook.
 - b) A ¼-inch diameter throwing rope as long as 1 ½ times the maximum width of the swimming pool or 50 feet, whichever is less, with 1 end attached to a 19-inch diameter ring buoy or rescue bag.
- (5) A swimming pool owner shall equip a pool at which lifeguard service is provided with all of the following:
 - a) A megaphone or public address.
 - b) One whistle per lifeguard on duty.
 - c) One rescue tube per lifeguard on duty where the water depth is more than 3.5 feet.
 - d) One resuscitation mask per lifeguard on duty.
- (6) When multiple swimming pools are in the same enclosure or in close proximity, the department or local health department may accept 1 set of safety equipment for all of the pools.
- (7) A swimming pool owner shall keep all required safety equipment in the pool enclosure or at another location approved by the department or local health department and shall keep the equipment stocked, in good repair, and in ready condition.

- (8) A swimming pool owner shall provide a telephone or other suitable means of communication for emergencies. The owner may locate the telephone or other means of communication in any of the following areas:
 - a) Within the pool enclosure.
 - b) In another location approved, in writing, by the department. If another location is approved, the owner shall post a sign indicating the location of the telephone within the pool enclosure.
- (9) A swimming pool owner shall post a sign at the telephone that indicates phone numbers for emergency response agencies and the name and address of the swimming pool to assist emergency personnel in locating the facility.

Swimming Pool Use R 325.2192

- (1) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that a person who has any of the following medical conditions is excluded from a swimming pool, except that the person may be granted use of a swimming pool upon written determination by the department, a personal physician, or a local health officer that the condition will not affect the health of other persons using the pool:
 - a) An infectious or communicable disease.
 - b) A possibly infectious condition, such as a cold, skin eruption, or open blister.
- (2) A swimming pool owner or his or her representative may require a person who uses a swimming pool to take a cleansing shower before entering the swimming pool enclosure.
- (3) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that the bathing apparel worn in a swimming pool is clean.
- (4) A person shall not spit in, or otherwise pollute, swimming pool water or related facilities.
- (5) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that running or boisterous or rough play is not permitted in a swimming pool enclosure or bathhouse.
- (6) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that a person wearing street clothes or shoes is not permitted in a swimming pool.
- (7) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that glass, other breakable materials, or an object or material that might create a hazardous condition or interfere with the efficient operation of the swimming pool are not permitted in a swimming pool enclosure. A swimming pool owner shall post a sign that prohibits glass, other breakable materials, and hazardous objects or materials in the pool enclosure.
- (8) If the owner or operator allows food or drink and associated articles in a swimming pool enclosure, then the owner or operator shall comply with all of the following provisions:
 - a) Provide poolside control to maintain safe and sanitary conditions.
 - b) Not permit food preparation in a swimming pool enclosure.
 - c) Prominently display a sign conveying requirements for safe and sanitary disposal of all wastes and precluding consumption of food and beverages within the pool.
- (9) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that the consumption of alcoholic beverages in a spa pool is not permitted.
- (10) A swimming pool owner shall prominently display, at the pool, a sign warning against the use of a pool after the consumption of alcohol.
- (11) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that a pet or other animal, except for a trained guide dog accompanying a person who has a disability, is not permitted in a swimming pool enclosure. A guide dog is not permitted in a pool.
- (12) A swimming pool owner shall ensure that diving is not permitted from the edge of a pool at any location where the water is less than 5 feet.

- (13) A swimming pool owner shall remove starting platforms or make them physically non-usable after any type of competitive usage, except as provided by R 325.2135. A swimming pool owner shall ensure that starting platforms are not used for any noncompetitive use.

Lifeguards R 325.2198

- (1) A swimming pool owner or operator shall provide lifeguard service at a swimming pool, other than a wading pool or a spa pool, if any of the following provisions apply to the swimming pool:
 - a) The pool is owned or operated by a government, a governmental subdivision or agency, a public corporation, or a school.
 - b) The total water surface area within the swimming pool enclosure is more than 2,400 square feet.
 - c) A diving board is provided.
- (2) If a lifeguard service is required by subrule (1) of this rule, then swimming pool owner or operator shall ensure that 1 lifeguard for every 75 people within the swimming pool is on duty in the enclosure when the swimming pool is open for use. The department may waive this requirement if a contingency plan had been adopted by the owner and approved by the department under R 325.2194a.
- (3) A lifeguard shall meet all of the following requirements:
 - a) Be a capable swimmer and be competent in lifeguarding techniques.
 - b) Have satisfactorily completed a recognized course of instruction in adult, child, and infant cardiopulmonary resuscitation with training in 2-person and resuscitation barriers of the type offered by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or the National Safety Council. A swimming pool owner or operator shall post valid and current evidence of successful completion of the course at the swimming pool when it is open for use.
 - c) At a minimum, have satisfactorily completed a nationally-recognized course of instruction, such as any of the following:
 - 1) The American Red Cross lifeguard course.
 - 2) The Young Men's Christian Association lifeguard course.
 - 3) The National Pool and Water-park pool lifeguard course.
 - 4) An equivalent lifeguard training course approved by the department. A swimming pool owner shall post valid and current evidence of successful completion of the course at the swimming pool when it is open for use.
 - d) Be dressed in suitable swimming attire which allows the lifeguard to be suitably prepared to enter the water and act in an emergency and which allows persons in the enclosure to be able to readily identify the lifeguard.
 - e) Ensure the proper supervision of instructional and recreational aquatic activities in the pool enclosure. Activities that would distract from the proper supervision of persons using the swimming pool or prevent immediate attention to a person in distress are prohibited. An instructor, teacher, or coach meeting the lifeguard requirements of this rule shall directly supervise swimming programs, such as the following:
 - 1) Recreational swimming.
 - 2) Lap swimming.
 - 3) Competitive swimming.
 - 4) Water exercise classes.
 - 5) Swimming lessons.

- 6) Scuba lessons.
- 7) Physical education classes.

If a supervising instructor, teacher, or coach does not meet all the requirements of this rule, then a swimming pool owner or operator shall provide a separate lifeguard who meets the requirements of this rule.

- f) Have the authority to enforce, and be responsible for enforcing rules pertaining to safety and sanitation.
 - (4) The department shall maintain a listing of cardiopulmonary resuscitation courses and lifeguarding courses that the department determines is equivalent to the type of course required by subrule (3) (a), (b), or (c) of this rule. The agencies offering the other courses are responsible for providing sufficient evidence to the department to determine course equivalency.
 - (5) At a swimming pool where lifeguard service is not required by subrule (1) of this rule and is not provided, a swimming pool owner or operator shall prominently display a sign warning that there is no lifeguard on duty. The owner or operator shall ensure that the sign has legible letters that are not less than 4 inches high.
- History: 1954 ACS 67, Eff. Mar 24, 1971; 1979 AC; 1979 ACS 15, Eff. July 21, 1983; 2001 MR 2, Eff. Feb. 6, 2001.

Jones, Michael J., (1995 Fall) Are Michigan P.E. swimming teachers and coaches risking liability problems? *MAHPERD Journal*, 6-8.

Public Swimming Pools. Public Act and Rules Governing Public Swimming Pools. EQC 1753 (11/2004).

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